



News Release

For Immediate Release:

Tuesday, May 6, 2008

Media Contact:

Jennifer Mayfield

Adolescent Health Coordinator

801-538-9317 (o) or 801-389-1580 (m)

Utah's Teen Birth Rate Up Slightly

State rate still lower than U.S.

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Utah's teen birth rate has risen slightly for the first time in 10 years. In 2006 (most recent data available), 31 of every 1,000 Utah girls ages 15-19 gave birth. This is up from 2005 when the rate was 29 per 1,000 girls. The good news is that Utah's rate continues to remain well below the national rate of 42 births per 1,000. It's also important to note that Utah rates have fallen more than 36 percent since 1991.

While the overall decline is encouraging, American teens still have more babies per capita than any other industrialized nation. And there are several areas in Utah, including Rose Park, Glendale, Downtown Ogden, and South Salt Lake, where birth rates exceed national rates.

“We are certainly concerned about those communities and are working with our partners to address the issues there,” said Utah Department of Health (UDOH) Adolescent Health Coordinator Jennifer Mayfield. “But we’re also very pleased to report that some of those areas are now seeing reductions in their teen birth rates from even just a year ago,”

One of those areas on the downward trend is Downtown Ogden. Becky Tierney, Project Coordinator for the Community Based Abstinence Grant at the Weber-Morgan Health Department, says “We are encouraged by the slight drop in Ogden’s rates. However, we want and need to make an even bigger impact in the lives of our teen girls.”

To do that, Tierney says the program will focus on extensive prevention outreach and education in local schools, community agencies, and churches.

-MORE-

Page 2 of 2 – Utah's Teen Birth Rate Up Slightly

When broken down by race and ethnicity, the highest teen birth rates continue to occur among Hispanic/Latina girls between the ages of 15-19. In 2005, the Utah rate for Hispanic/Latina teens was 100 per 1,000 girls. In 2006, the rate rose to 105 births per 1,000 girls.

The UDOH and its partners continue their work to stop so many young girls from getting pregnant. The department is helping to educate teens and parents by directing federal funds for the Utah Abstinence Education Program to six community-based programs, including Colors of Success, the Community Building Community Initiative of Midvale City, the Pregnancy Resource Center of Salt Lake, the Worldwide Organization for Women and two local health departments.

In 2007, The Utah Adolescent Health Network, managed by the UDOH Child, Adolescent and School Health Program, was chosen to pilot the "Parents Matter" program developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Utah used the funding to implement a Spanish language version for Hispanic/Latino parents. The program teaches parents and guardians with children between the ages of 9-12 how to better talk with their kids about sexually-transmitted diseases and pregnancy prevention. Research has shown that parents play a key role in preventing teen pregnancy. And teens who say they have high-quality relationships with their parents are more likely to make responsible choices.

Partnering with Planned Parenthood Association of Utah, UDOH launched Parents Matter by implementing three 5-week sessions, reaching out to more than 100 Hispanic/Latino parents and children. Childcare, dinner, and educational materials were provided for all family members involved with the program.

To learn more about teen pregnancy prevention efforts in Utah, contact Jennifer Mayfield at jmayfield@utah.gov or by calling 801-538-9317. More national information can be found at <http://www.thenationalcampaign.org>

#

The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.